CTGGGGGGCTGTGTAAGAACTAGCTTGGGCATTTGCACTGGCATC-3'; SEQ ID NO:7) and on the other hand a primer pair consisting of P6 (5' –AGTTCT TACACAGCCCCCCAGCCTGGTAGTAATCATCATGATGAC- 3'; SEQ ID NO:8) and P4 above (sequence encoding the linker is underlined). This non-cleavable linker sequence encodes a peptide with the sequence QASSYTAPQPQ (SEQ ID NO:2).

In the Claims

Please cancel Claims 3, 12, 15, and 17 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

1. (Amended) A method of improving nematode resistance or tolerance in a plant and its descendant plants comprising:

integrating into the genome of said plant a DNA molecule encoding a fusion protein, wherein said fusion protein comprises:

(a) a first protein, or protein domain, with anti-pathogenic activity;

(b) a linker peptide; and

(c) a second protein, or protein domain, with anti-pathogenic activity, wherein at least one of the proteins or protein domains with anti-pathogenic activity has proteinase inhibitor activity.

2. (Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said fusion protein further comprises at least one additional protein or protein domain fused by at least one additional linker peptide to at least one of said first protein or protein domain, said linker peptide, and said second protein or protein domain.

4. (Amended) The method according to claim 3, wherein at least one of said first protein or protein domain and said second protein or protein domain comprises one of Oc-I and Oc-IΔD86.

5. (Amended) The method according to claim 3, wherein at least one of said first protein or protein domain and said second protein or protein domain comprises CpTI .

6. (Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said DNA molecule comprises a promoter sequence capable of driving expression preferentially in plant roots.

7. (Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the linker peptide comprises an amino acid sequence which is capable of being proteolytically cleaved by the plant.

8. (Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the linker peptide comprises an amino acid sequence which is capable of being proteolytically stable in the plant.

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13. (Amended) An isolated DNA molecule encoding a fusion protein, wherein said fusion protein comprises:

(a) a first protein, or protein domain, with anti-pathogenic activity;

(b) a linker peptide; and

(c) a second protein, or protein domain, with anti-pathogenic activity, wherein at least one of the proteins or protein domains with anti-pathogenic activity has proteinase inhibitor activity.

14. (Amended) The DNA molecule according to claim 13 wherein said fusion protein further comprises at least one additional protein or protein domain fused by at least one additional linker peptide to at least one of said first protein or protein domain, said linker peptide, and said second protein or protein domain.

16. (Amended) A transgenic plant expressing the DNA molecule according to claim 13.

Please add the following new claims 18-23:

18. A method of improving resistance or tolerance in a plant and its descendant plants to a nematode, comprising:

integrating into a genome of a plant a DNA molecule encoding a fusion protein, wherein said fusion protein comprises:

a. a first protein, or protein domain, with anti-pathogenic activity, wherein said first protein or protein domain comprises Oc-IΔD86;

b. a linker peptide comprising an amino acid sequence characterized by at least one of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, and SEQ ID NO:11; and

c. a second protein, or protein domain, with anti-pathogenic activity, wherein said second protein or protein domain comprises CpTI.

19. The method according to claim 18, wherein said fusion protein further comprises at least one additional protein or protein domain fused by at least one additional linker peptide to at least one of said first protein or protein domain, said linker peptide, and said second protein or protein domain.

20. The method according to claim 18, wherein said DNA molecule comprises a promoter sequence capable of driving expression preferentially in plant roots.

21. The DNA according to claim 13, wherein said first protein or protein domain comprises Oc-IΔD86.